



## Policy Attachment: Adoption Assistance 15.11

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Protocol for Making Adoptive Placements</b>
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### Additional Information:

1. When the permanency goal changes to a dual goal or sole goal of Adoption, DCS/Provider will begin to discuss adoption with the current resource family. Family Service Worker/Permanency Specialist (FSW/PS)/Provider will begin to gather required documentation needed for the potential adoption. The FSW/PS will document in TNKids under the "Identified Pre-Adoptive Home" icon if the current resource family is willing to adopt the child.
2. Once a child has been in care for nine months and no later than immediately following TPR, the FSW/PS or Provider gathers the remaining information needed to write the Pre-Placement and Presentation Summaries.
3. By the 12<sup>th</sup> month (or sooner if TPR has already occurred or placement is considered legal risk) of custody of a child with a dual or sole goal of adoption **and** the current resource family is not willing to adopt and no adoptive placement has been identified, the FSW/PS or Provider serving the child will convene a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) to write the Individualized Recruitment Plan and begin the process of Individualized Recruitment. Recruitment may be limited until TPR occurs but it may include reviewing child's history to identify other family members or other significant connections in the child's life.
4. The PS meets with the prospective adoptive family to present the Presentation Summary, to determine the child's eligibility for adoption assistance and to negotiate the rate if applicable. Then the PS submits the rate for approval to the specified regional Adoption Assistance Designee. (The Presentation Summary is not required in circumstances where the Resource Parents are adopting but, the **Preplacement Summary** must be completed for all adoptions. **Full disclosure** must be given to all adoptive families. The PS still must meet with the family to determine the child's eligibility for adoption assistance and to negotiate the rate if applicable). The PS/FSW prepares the Intent to Adopt/Adoption Assistance Application form and has family sign to demonstrate their intent to adopt child at the rate approved during the negotiation discussion. This is a formal agreement but it is not a legal document. The child's birth name must be used on this form; however, the family and child can choose to begin "calling" the child by the proposed adoptive name. No legal documents, school records or insurance forms can be placed in the adoptive name until finalization. The family, child and workers should continue to "celebrate" the adoptive placement of the child.
5. The "Adoptive" family is expected to accept parental responsibility of the child and schedule medical appointments, etc. but must keep DCS/Provider updated on the child's medical and behavioral issues.
6. PS helps the family secure an attorney and obtain an attorney fee letter and subsequent approval.
7. Attorney files petition to adopt and secures a court date.
8. The PS completes the Adoption Assistance Agreement with the family at any point prior to the court date for finalization (can be completed during the time of the Intent to Adopt/Adoption Assistance Application or at a later date). The child's adoptive name is entered on the Adoption Assistance Agreement. The family and the PS sign the Adoption Assistance Agreement upon completion but the effective date cannot be prior to the date of finalization of the adoption. The resource home board payment will continue until finalization.
9. If the current resource family is adopting the child, the adoption should be completed within 90 days of the TPR (provided the court did not issue any additional requests for information and the child has been in the home required time period). Providers will be paid their regular continuum per diem rate until finalization or up to the 91st day after TPR and are expected to continue to make the foster parent payments until finalization. If the court has caused the delay in the finalization, an extension of the per diem rate can be requested by the Provider. An extension for any other "good cause" can be requested from the RA/Adoption Designee if it is one that is beyond the control of the Provider's actions. A CFT must be held prior to discharging a child from the continuum to discuss the case, options and barriers to finalization. The Provider

must be present at the CFTM and will be able to discuss the discharge or possible extension and will know the effective date of both possibilities.

10. If the adoptive placement is a new placement, the adoption should be completed within 60 days after the end of the 6-month placement period (provided the court did not issue any additional requests for information). Providers will be paid their regular continuum per diem rate until finalization or up to the 61<sup>st</sup> day after the 6 month placement period ends and foster care payments will be made by the provider until finalization. If the court has caused the delay in the finalization, an extension of the per diem rate can be requested by the Provider. An extension for any other "good cause" can be requested from the RA/Adoption Designee if it is one that is beyond the control of the Provider's actions. A CFTM must be held prior to discharging a child from the continuum to discuss the case, options and barriers to finalization. The Provider must be present at the CFTM and will be able to discuss the discharge or possible extension and will know the effective date of both possibilities.
11. Prior to the Adoption court hearing (if not already completed), the PS/FSW/Provider meets with the adoptive family and signs the Adoption Assistance Agreement. The AA Agreement will have only the adoptive name on the contract, but the social security number will remain the same.
12. The PS gets the certified order of Adoption Finalization at court and takes the signed AA Agreement to the office to set up the Adoption Assistance Case in the child's adoptive name. PS/FSW will notify required personnel to stop Resource Home Board Payments and begin Adoption Assistance payments.
13. Adoptive family can request a new social security number following finalization from the social security administration. If a new number is given, the family must provide the new SS# to the Permanency Specialist as soon as it is received. If a new SS# is not given, the child's birth SS# will continue to be used with as many safeguards as possible.

**Important Points to Remember:**

- Resource Home Board Payments continue until finalization.
- Adoption Assistance payments do not start until finalization.
- Birth name remains the legal name until finalization.
- Social Security number does not change throughout the adoption process.
- NO psuedo social security numbers should ever be used.
- Social Security number can only change if the adoptive family requests and is granted a new number following finalization.
- The timeline for adoption begins when the Intent to Adopt is signed and the Child and Family Team agrees with the adoptive placement.
- Foster-to-Adopt should be completed 90 days from TPR.
- New Placement Adoptions should be completed 60 days after the end of the 6-month placement period.
- Out of state adoptive placements must be approved through the ICPC office and will be considered Resource homes until finalization.